



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 7 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
7 NOVEMBER 1968

1. Vietnam

Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, the Liberation Front representative at the Paris talks, is stressing that she is there to participate in "preparatory" discussions prior to the opening of "four-way" substantive talks. She also asserts that the Front delegation is willing to begin these preliminary talks without the presence of Saigon's representative, claiming that the Front speaks for the "people" of South Vietnam. We presume that the Communists intend to make the "preliminary" round a major phase of the talks.

2. Laos

No significant fighting has developed as the rains taper off, but signs still point to a Communist dry season offensive. In the North, the enemy is evidently setting the stage for its annual effort against government guerrilla positions. Roads are being constructed toward major government base areas, and the Communists have taken a number of outlying defensive positions in recent days.

In the Plaine des Jarres area, enemy forces have regained some positions lost last summer along the northern rim and have also moved on government forces positioned along the southern edge of the plain. In the South, most of the enemy's offensive activity will probably not start until the rice harvest is completed some time late this month.

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3. Election Reaction

There has been no high-level Communist comment yet on the US election results. Early commentaries by Moscow Radio predictably stressed that the election was not so much a victory for the Republicans as a vote of no confidence in current US policies. The first reaction from Peking merely said that the election would bring no changes in the "aggressive nature of US imperialism."

Wilson, De Gaulle, Kiesinger, and other Western leaders have all released standard congratulatory messages. French press reports out of Saigon claim that the South Vietnamese leaders "reacted with satisfaction and relief" to Mr. Nixon's victory. Radio Seoul used the same phrase to characterize South Korean reaction.

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4. Soviet Union

We see nothing new in the statements being made by Soviet leaders in connection with their anniversary celebrations in Moscow yesterday and today. On most foreign policy issues, the line is relatively calm.

5. Mexico

Students have decided to continue their strike, and street demonstrations are likely to resume. A mass student assembly is scheduled tonight at one of the schools where violence broke out earlier in the crisis, and the aggressive tone of smaller assemblies over the past several days suggests that the month-long truce may soon end.

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6. Portugal

Ambassador Bennett made his first call on the new prime minister, Mr. Caetano, on Monday afternoon. Bennett came away quite impressed; he concludes: "I believe we can look forward to reasonable discussion and rational argumentation with Caetano, even though we may not always find agreement."

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

September Shipping: The number of ships calling at Haiphong was slightly higher in September than in August, but the total was well below the average for the first eight months of the year. Congestion reached record levels as storms and heavy rains disrupted port operations.

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The number of arrivals in October is expected to decline, but congestion has continued.

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North Vietnam imported slightly more in September than in August, but again the figures are well under this year's average.

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Over-all imports during the first nine months of 1968 have been greater than for the full year of 1967.

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Further Chinese Pullout: A Chinese Communist rear services unit in northwestern North Vietnam has not been heard in communications since 30 October. This unit was on the radio net serving construction units formerly in the northwest.

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Propaganda Line on "Revolutionary Administration": The Communists continue to keep open the option of surfacing a governing apparatus as a rival of the South Vietnamese regime. A Liberation Radio broadcast on 31 October describing the Communist drive to establish a

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"revolutionary administration" stressed the nationwide political importance of the campaign. It said this was a "new stage" in the war which will "decide the total triumph over the US." The drive was described as "the greatest, widest, and most intense political campaign in the history of our people's struggle...."

The broadcast laid heavy emphasis on the alleged legitimacy of the political institutions being created by the Communists in the countryside by repeatedly noting that "liberation committees" are being formed through a process of elections in which vast numbers of people are said to be participating. A special point is made of the opportunity this campaign provides for individuals who have previously not supported the Viet Cong to climb aboard the bandwagon. The campaign, it said, will "definitely determine who are our friends and who are our foes."

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At least ten transports flew from Hanoi to the Lang Son area on 6 November, although some of the aircraft were involved in practice bombing exercises.

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Film Production: A recent message has confirmed that North Vietnam is producing "war atrocity" television films for foreign audiences. A message of 1 November from a "North Vietnamese Television Films Workshop" states that a television unit of the North Vietnamese "war atrocities center" was to direct its attention to a "new situation" in the area of North Vietnam just north of the Demilitarized Zone.

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The training and equipment for North Vietnamese television films come largely from the East Germans under a 1967 cultural aid agreement, although the Soviets also seem to have provided some aid. The aid appears directed only at providing Hanoi with the means for producing films for foreign consumption. The North Vietnamese have no domestic television.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

US Elections: Nothing has been heard so far from Hanoi on the US election results.

Protests Reported: Radio Hanoi broadcast several brief accounts of antiwar protests and demonstrations in the US and Britain in an English language international broadcast on 5 November. The broadcast highlighted a demonstration in New York last Saturday sponsored by a peace group composed of clergy and laymen. It included an account of a rally on the same day near the White House which was followed by a march on the presidential candidates' campaign headquarters nearby. Radio Hanoi also briefly reported protest demonstrations on 3 November at Fort Dix and in London.

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